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Letitia Hall to Sarah Bracher, 11 July 1849

Mission House

July 11th 1849

My dear Sister,

It is but this moment I have discovered that a mail closes for the Mauritius this afternoon, I therefore hasten to send you a short acknowledgement of your kind remembrance of me — you must pardon me if I forget to reply to any part of your letter as I have forwarded it to the farm. I hope when you next write it will be to inform us that you are about to leave a place where I feel convinced you will never consider yourself at home — I hope my dear little Fanny is over getting the change of climate, Mr Bilton told me she looked *very* poorly when he left, I wish I could give the little darling a kiss just now, you must give her one for me and remind her of those I have given her, it will soon be her birth day and as it will be past long ere you receive this it will not be amiss to wish her many happy returns of it.

I have only spent 7 weeks at the farm since you left I have now been more than a month with Mrs Smithies but am expecting one of our brothers in for me You will think that we ought to be more careful of the way in which we live seeing that we know not what a day may bring forth. You and I little thought when we have seen Mr G Leake at his cellar looking to the good things of this world that he was to be allowed to care for them so short a time, he was called to answer for all he had done in the flesh on the 28th of June. Mr S Moore followed him on the 7 inst, neither of them had long illness, Mr L only laid a fortnight, and Bunbury has not been spared, the gay, the happy Mrs Sillifant was then a *maid* a *bride* and a *corpse* in less than 6 months — she died about a fortnight since. Theodosia tells me her sufferings were dreadful, poor thing, she was 2 months in the family way — Cleaver is in the Hospital and not likely to come out alive their daughter Mrs Duffield is believed to be in dying circumstances and what is worse with her she does not see the need of a Saviour's pardoning love without which a dying bed must be comfortless indeed You remember Robert Nickleson, Walter's nephew, he is on a

dying bed at Mrs Crisp's, for our little community you will think with me that we never had so many warnings around us at one time before — After this page of death and sickness you will expect me to have another of a different quality — I don't know whether the governor had reduced Edward's salary before you left but however they have done so and he & Rob^t are just on the same footing with 84£ per annum. E was in a sad way at first, 2 of the Parkhurst boys in service at Guildford took it into their heads to steal a quantity of goods from their employers and others and take them selves off into the bush, of course a reward was offered for them and several persons started thinking to gain the prize but some were rather disappointed when Robert brought them in, a special sessions was called at an early period on account of the young rogues but the night previous the birds had again flown — Wittenoom, Drummond and Robert were all dispatched after them and the next day Robert again brought them to Perth you may suppose he is in as much favor as ever with the Governor (the last reward was 10£) We have not heard from dear Henry since you left he has been gone nearly 10 months so I suppose we shall receive more than letters by the next English ship — Mr Scott has a sister who is a widow living with him she came in the *Merope* — The people appear rather different what with the strange officers and Soldiers the congregation at church and chape too is changed.

I have not said anything of or to Mr Bracher yet but it is not because I have not thought of him I suppose he did not write to me because you were not the bearer of a letter to him I hope you will give my love to him and tell him he ought not to bear malice but to return good for evil it would have been just as well if he had written that little spleen to me as to Mr Shenton as from all I have heard it was not approved of, but this is by the way — I have scarcely left room for all I wish to say I do not like crossed writing and therefore wished to avoid giving it you — I must tell some thing about the farm, as far as I am able to judge they are going on very comfortably, but have been put back by an accident that occurred the other day which I will give Papa's own description of. He says

I am sorry to inform you that immediately after a severe storm on Friday the 30th of June about 5 o'clock in the evening our chimney fell through the roof and completely smashed the Dining Table, mama was in the room alone and had just moved out of the place it fell on I

had left the room a few minutes before and where I was sitting the place was covered with the fragments, where you usually sit the place was occupied by about 50 cubic ft of solid clay had it been a little later we should all have been in at Tea and from the manner in which it fell it would have been impossible for more than one of the family to have escaped under the circumstances it is one of the most miraculous interpositions of the Divine providence that I ever witnessed. We are now sitting under the canopy of Heaven dear mama is very unwell as she has not yet recovered from the *shock* she received. We may all be thankful that it was not worse. I scarcely know how to be thankful enough for such sparing mercy.

I earnestly pray that it may be regarded in a proper light by them — I am very much obliged for the lengthy account of your residence its manner would not suit me. I am sure your advise came too late for Tom Hester as he had been gone to Adelaide some time Mr L's death seems to have shaken poor Capt H a good deal. Mrs Edward tells me she is *not* likely to increase just yet she seems to be in good health and spirits. The Sholls are coming to Perth as Mr W Sholl is going to Adelaide and R S— means to try and get his brother's practice — I have been interesting Miss Barrett in knitting lately, I hope sometime or other to be able to send my dear Fanny some to sew on the bottom of her *pantaloons* — Adieu my dear Sister give my kind love to Mr Bracher and as many kisses as you have time to spare to Fanny I know if mama, papa & brothers knew I was writing they w^d say give our love so you must consider it so.

Yours affectionately
Letitia

Many thanks for the Boa. I like it much better than the colonial fur, it has been very much admired Mrs Smithies thinks I might spare her a piece off for cuffs.

Once again adieu
Letitia

Mr and Mrs Smithies wish to be kindly remembered.

If I had more time I would tell you such a tale about Miss Graham would you believe she could like old [?Denis] well enough to accept an offer from him. I think she has pretty well done for herself here.